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Waste Wise Events Project – Case Study All Girls Surf Showdown 2007

Background

The North East Waste Forum (NEWF) is a collective of local councils that have come together to share resources to help avoid and reduce waste going to landfill in the Northern NSW region. The NEWF collective not only provides support for participating local Councils in managing waste, but also provides support and advice to various commercial sectors on how best to implement sustainable practices that reduce waste generation, wastes landfilled, and promote the recovery of recyclable resources.

An initiative of NEWF, The Waste Wise Events (WWE) Project, began in October 2006 and focused on reducing waste to landfill by implementing Waste Wise Management Plans (WWMP's) for seven events across the NEWF region. A variety of events were chosen with participant numbers ranging from 2,000 to 25,000 people. Events covered agricultural, sporting, family, food & music festivals.

All Girls Surf Showdown



The annual All Girls Surf Showdown held at Lennox Head attracts up to 4,000 people each June. The event is organised by the All Girls Surf Volunteer Committee and attracts mainly a local crowd and competitors from across the State. The local Lions Club runs a food stall; there is also a coffee and juice stall. A lot of competitors and spectators cater from home. The event runs over 2 days, starting at 7am and finishing at 4pm. The committee is very environmentally aware and has attempted to introduce recycling at previous events but have found that contamination prevented recycling of materials collected.

The NEWF encouraged the All Girls to participate in the Waste Wise Events Program to build their skills in this area and to assist with improving the process of waste management at community events.

The Challenge

The amount of waste generated at community/public events can be significant (about 1 litre/person/day), creating an unpleasant mess and large clean up costs for event organisers & councils. The north coast is host to approximately 300 events and 23 regular monthly markets each year. With many events attracting visitor numbers from the thousands to the tens of thousands the disposal of waste constitutes a major problem for councils. Many events in the region present unique challenges by attracting many visitors from outside the region.

Waste Wise Management Plan

A WWMP incorporates recycling and waste avoidance objectives into each stage of event planning, sets achievable targets and assigns roles and responsibilities. Targets set for this event included:

Packaging:

- Stallholders and participating cafes to use biodegradable packaging for serving food.
- Avoid the use of polystyrene and non recyclable plastic.
- Avoid single sachet items and use bulk dispensers for sugar and sauces.

Promotion of the recycling systems:

- Pre and post event media releases in local papers.
- Letter to stallholders outlining packaging requirements.
- PA announcements every hour.
- Advertisement in event program
- Competitors received a sticker (opposite) with the message "Wipe Out Waste".
- Signage on bins designed specifically for event bins.
- The use of council's Waste Wise Event banner.
- Fun recycling education competition announced over PA.

Recovery Targets:

- Recycle bins: aluminium cans; plastic bottles; glass and liquid paper cups.
- Event organisers to separate cardboard and recycle using the recycle bin at the local pub.

Equipment:

- 6 x 240L yellow lidded recycling bins with fitted rosette lids and locks.
- 6 x 240L red lidded waste bins.
- 2 x 1.5m³ skips (one for recycling & one for waste).

Bin Plan

- Four bin stations positioned on site comprising one recycling bin and one waste bin located at 15m intervals on dunes and near food stalls.
- Volunteers to manage the bins at the event.

NORTH EAST WASTE FORUM

NEW WAYS WITH LESS WASTE

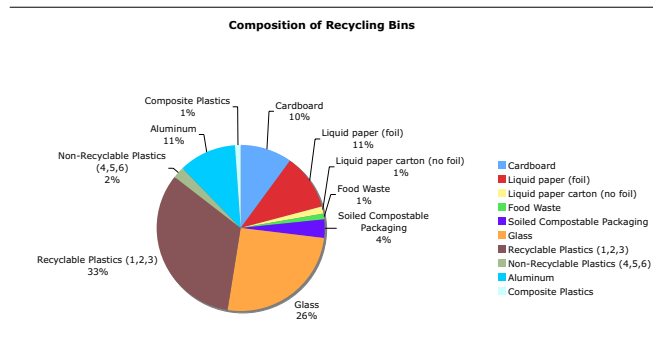


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Results

A waste audit was conducted at the end of the event. All recycling bins and half of the waste bins were audited. The results of the waste audit follow.



Recycling Bins

Based on volume, 40% of the total waste generated at the event was recovered through the events recycling bins. The composition of the recycling bins can be seen above. The average contamination was 10%. The major contaminants were soy milk cartons, some soiled paper and food waste and non-recyclable plastic containers.

Waste Bins

The waste bins contained only 6% recycling contamination, including glass, aluminium and recyclable plastics. Whilst the newspaper made up a large percentage of the waste bins it was not targeted for recycling through the events bins, however, we were able to pull it out and send it for recycling.

Cardboard

Only a small percentage of cardboard ended up in the waste bins. The cardboard from the event was separated by event organisers and recycled in a separate arrangement with a local hotel.

The Future

The All Girls Surf Showdown organisers are keen to implement recycling at next year's event.

Recommendations for next year's event include:

- Working with council to improve waste wise event management procedures.
- Trial the use of yellow (recycling) and red (waste) buckets for picking up litter to assist recycling of litter.

The North East Waste forum acknowledges the assistance of the Packaging Stewardship Forum with the purchase of bins and stickers and advice on implementation of this project.

Outcomes

The All Girls Surf Showdown proved to be a successful Waste Wise Event by reducing waste to landfill by 40%. Other outcomes included:

- Bin stickers and rosette lid recycling bins proved to assist with recycling recovery and reducing contamination experienced in previous years.
- All food and drink vendors used biodegradable packaging to serve food and drinks.
- All food and drink vendors used refill dispensaries for sugar and sauces.
- The announcements over the PA were consistent and a great reminder for people to use the right bin.
- The event organisers received positive feedback from the public about the recycling systems.
- The Waste Wise Events Banner was well located at the entry to the event.
- Highlighted the need to improve council's internal process for approval of waste management plans and organisation of equipment for events.

The All Girls Surf Showdown organisers did a fantastic job considering the constraints. The organiser's commitment to act environmentally responsibly with the event waste is a credit to them.

Costs

The event organisers incurred an increase of \$150 in waste disposal and recycling recovery costs at this year's event. This was primarily due to waste charges being donated in kind by council in previous years.

Contacts

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All Girls Surf Showdown

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